



JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON, GOVERNOR • RONALD J. LEVY, DIRECTOR

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November 6, 2009

Dear Colleague:

In recent years a national consensus has emerged that the secure and patient-centered exchange of electronic health information is imperative to reducing medical errors, improving medical decision making, promoting the public health and containing health care costs. Too often, health care providers in Missouri, and throughout the country, do not have the right information at the right time and in the right format to make the best decisions regarding the care of their patients.

Several regional efforts have emerged around the state in recent years to begin to address this problem, and numerous targeted initiatives are underway within state and local government, as well. With the passage of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) all of us in Missouri who care deeply about the health of our state's citizens have been presented with an opportunity to take this work to the next level. Under ARRA, new federal funds will be made available to support the planning and implementation of the necessary infrastructure for statewide health information exchange.

I'm writing to seek your involvement and support for this effort. In mid-October, the state was required to submit a proposal for a cooperative agreement and grant funding under ARRA. We have established a web site at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/hie/index.shtml> where you can find the grant application (under the **Action Items** tab) and other relevant information. We've been advised that the state of Missouri is eligible to receive a total of \$13,765,040 in federal funds during the course of this project.

The imperative, rationale and ambitious goals for our effort have been announced today in Executive Order 09-27 from Governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon. That Executive Order is also posted on the web site referenced above.

I have been asked at this point in time to serve as Health Information Technology Coordinator for the state of Missouri, with the support of George Oestreich, PharmD, MPA, the Project Director for the state HIT/HIE team. Members of the team are listed on the web site for your information, and our efforts are being facilitated and supported by a consulting team from Manatt Health Solutions (www.manatthealthsolutions.com). Charlotte Krebs of Primaris has been tasked as our Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator, and is available to address any questions or concerns at ckrebs@primaris.org or by phone at 573-424-9174.

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We will now be reaching out to establish an Advisory Board to provide leadership and vision to the State's planning effort. We also will establish Working Groups that will leverage the vast expertise of Missouri stakeholders on topics including Governance, Finance, Technology Infrastructure, Legal and Policy Issues, Consumer Engagement, and Business and Operations. The crucial issues of privacy and security of health information will be overarching concerns. In particular, the Legal and Policy workgroup will establish Missouri's framework for privacy and security and the Business and Operations workgroup will operationalize the protections. It is our intention to establish vigorous dialogue with private and public stakeholders and facilitate a robust and inclusive decision-making process around strategic and operational planning.

Participation in the Working Groups will be open and voluntary, but will require the dedication of time and expertise. Requests to participate in the specific work groups should be directed promptly to Charlotte Krebs, along with any suggestions of others that we should be tapping to support this work. Our timeframe is challenging and your participation will be crucial to ensuring Missouri's success.

Thank you in advance for your support. I look forward to working with you to make this vision a reality in the state of Missouri.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ronald J. Levy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ronald" and last name "Levy" clearly legible.

Ronald J. Levy, Director
Missouri Department of Social Services
HIT Coordinator, Missouri Office of Health Information Technology (MO-HITECH)